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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY 17, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for February 17, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

BOLGE / SABAH (GUNEY) / EKSPRES / OZGUR GUNDEM / EVRENSEL: Some members of Democratic Society Party (DSP), majority of whom were women, attempted to conduct an unauthorized demonstration in Adana yesterday. Security forces did not allow the group to hold a protest activity when people gathered in front of the DSP party building, started shouting slogans in support of the PKK, and attempted to march in the street. The Deputy Security Director and a police chief were wounded when people in the party building reportedly threw heavy objects at the police from the windows. Some objects hit shop windows and caused material damage. Police detained nearly 200 demonstrators during the unrest.

SABAH (GUNEY): Twenty-six refugees, who entered the country illegally, were caught as they were traveling from the Hatay province to Istanbul by Jandarma teams on the road between Antakya and Adana. 8 Mauritians, 8 Somalians, 4 Saudis, 2 Palestinians, 2 Iraqis and 2 Bangladeshis were arrested.

ZAMAN / CUMHURİYET / OZGUR GUNDEM / SABAH: The dailies reported alleged torture cases occurring in Adana's 6th Army Corps Command. Army prosecutor filed an indictment against a Lieutenant and 29 soldiers on charges of killing with torture on June 28 a 20-year-old private who was jailed in a military prison. The indictment pressed separate charges against 6 more soldiers, who were under arrest for serious torture in the 6th Army Corps Command. Ozgur Gundem and Sabah branded this case as similar to the torture cases of the U.S. soldiers on Abu Ghraib prisoners. Amnesty International will also reportedly examine the death of the private.

ZAMAN: A case known as "JITEM case" has continues in Diyarbakir's 3rd Heavy Penalty Court. A brigadier general, a major, a colonel and some PKK defectors are among the eleven defendants in the case. They are being charged with "establishing a ring to commit criminal activities." The case covers criminal activities before 1996 allegedly perpetrated by this JITEM group.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Martin Scheinin, UN Human Rights Committee human rights reporter, will hold meetings with contacts over the next week in Ankara and Diyarbakir and obtain first-hand knowledge of current human rights issues in Turkey. Scheinin's reporting comes while human rights cases are recently increasing in the country as many members of the intelligentsia have been held as defendants on charges of violating article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A staff member of the daily Ozgur Gundem has reportedly been arrested in Mus province on charges of "being a member of a terrorist organization" following his detention and arraignment.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Four senior DSP members in Mersin, who were detained (on an unspecified date) for making a press announcement in support of Abdullah Ocalan, have been released following their arraignment. Separately, senior DSP members in Tunceli, who were detained following an unannounced raid on DSP headquarters in Tunceli, have been released.

SABAH (GUNEY): Forty-two people in Sanliurfa were detained when people attempted to hold an unauthorized demonstration to protest the arrest of Abdullah Ocalan seven years ago on February 15. Seventeen of the detained have been released without being arraigned.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Kurds, who reportedly have passed their day indoors as a sign of protest on February 15, hit the streets and held demonstrations yesterday in Siirt, Mardin, Van and Sanliurfa. Thousands of people in Batman marched for hours. People reportedly said that they would continue to gather in the squares every day until the Kurdish issue is resolved through democratic means. Police detained 50 people in Bitlis's Tatvan district. Reportedly, nearly 500 people staged a march in Agri and ended the protest peacefully. Tension in Sirnak and its Cizre district continued and people staged a march to continue to protest the appearance of military tanks in the streets a couple of days ago in Cizre. In a separate article, the daily

reported that Diyarbakir mainly remained silent and non-protesting throughout the day on February 15, marking a clear contrast with the rest of the region. Only small groups in some quarters were seen holding protests there.

OZGUR GUNDEM: AKP (Justice and Development Party) deputy from Mardin announced that the decision to establish an architecture and engineering faculty and an arts faculty in Mardin has been ratified by the president following its ratification by the council of ministers.

EVRENSEL: Avalanches, which took place at eight separate points along the road between Hakkari and Van, closed the road for traffic once again.

CUMHURIYET / HURRIYET: The daily reported allegations of CHP deputies who reportedly claimed that bird flu disease broke out one month earlier than the first publicly known cases in Agri's Dogubeyazit district on December 30 in Turkey. Prior to the cases in Agri, Ministry of Agriculture and Village Works allegedly had already detected bird flu disease in eight separate spots in the eastern provinces.

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